

W1TKZ

The Spark Gap

April 1989

Not Available at Newsstands

Official Journal
of the
Wellesley Amateur Radio Society



President's Message

by Tom Kinahan, N1CPE

Well, we have had some pretty interesting discussions recently at meetings. For some reason, whenever I ask if there is anything else to talk about the no-code license comes up. On March 16, we heard from Barry Goldwater, K7UGA, on videotape. He said we need 200,000 new hams in order to gain enough clout to retain our present frequencies. If you were not at the meeting and you would like to see what K7UGA had to say, let me know and I'll lend you the tape (VHS format).

It is encouraging to see so many of you at meetings these days. I think we tied a record on March 16: thirty-four people in the meeting room at the Red Cross to hear James Lee, N1DDK, show us his home-brewed computerized repeater controller. We also had that many last September 15.

The Wellesley ARS is now the proud owner of a TS-430 HF transceiver. Thanks to all your

support for this acquisition — now come down to the club and put it on the air! The HF Transceiver Fund is now empty, but I would like to make W1TKZ a digital station, too, with RTTY, AMTOR, packet, and the like. Let's all keep an eye out for equipment that would further improve our station.

That's it for this month; 73 to all.

Code or No Code?

by Bruno Bedetti, NR1G

To be or not to be. The Morse code is a new language. The question whether one can become a radio amateur without learning the code is ambiguous. However, one can analyse the advantages and disadvantages and then draw a conclusion.

One disadvantage is that it requires a certain effort to learn the code. As with anything new for the human mind, one must concentrate, correlate, and co-ordinate. All three functions are free of charge.

The advantage is that you can be heard better on the other side, because code transmission requires less than 500 Hz bandwidth, as compared to SSB telephony, which requires 3,000 Hz. Therefore, CW is less affected by interference; also, the equipment is simpler and more reliable.

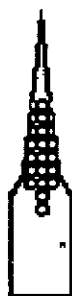
Meetings

All meetings are on Thursdays at
7:30 p.m.

April 20
May 4
May 18
June 1

211 Washington Street, Wellesley

In order to satisfy both groups, the keyers and the talkers, let the talkers have a small slice of the VHF spectrum in which they can create their own Tower of Babel, while the keyers continue to communicate around the world.



No-Code: More Opinions

The foregoing by NR1G was received in response to last month's invitation for contributions. This newspaper has observed that emotions run high on this issue, and that a few members are neutral. Contributions on this subject will continue to be printed as received.

Tom, N1CPE, says: "I am just going around asking people's opinion on the subject. Almost all the time they start out against the no-code license, but after I present the arguments in favor, they change their minds. Either I am very convincing, or the arguments are convincing: I suspect the latter. I think I speak for the majority of the people I have talked to, when I say that we do not want amateur radio diluted, but perhaps the need to grow means we have to take that risk (although we would still retain written exams)."

George, WA5NVI, is "basically in favor of a no-code, VHF-only or UHF-only license, in order to populate these bands and bring in more 'high-tech' people — but with reservations. The merits (and limitations) of CW have to be appreciated, and the mode protected and preserved for the minority that uses it, including the minority of new and young hams who genuinely like it."

Officers

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Tom Kinahan, N1CPE 508/ 877-3456

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Novice Class Update

by Frank MacKenzie-Lamb, NG11

At the time of writing, the ten-week Novice course is nearing a successful conclusion.

After the first three weeks, fifteen of the original twenty students remain and have continued to show enthusiasm and determination. It may interest you to know that several of them decided to go for their tickets as a result of the publicity the WARS received on regional TV during the Armenian earthquake.

From what I hear on the repeaters, I think our club has the best-prepared and most thorough Novice course around — due largely, in fact, to the personality, technical skill, and teaching ability of Roger Tobin, N1EYZ.

HF Transceiver Fund

As last month's list of contributors was being prepared, Vice President Rita, N1DDI, was making her contribution. As a result, she was left off the list of worthies. Please take out last month's issue and enter her name so she can receive the thanks of the club.

As noted above by Tom, N1CPE, the fund is now defunct, owing to the purchase of a TS-830S transceiver and 35-watt Astron power supply.

WARS Net

Every Wednesday evening at 8:00pm we meet on the club repeater, 147.03 MHz, to chew the fat or to make important announcements, as the spirit moves us. Nonmembers are welcome, too.

Roy Cornelius, KC1KB, does not usually check into the net, because he lives in Brockton and just cannot raise the repeater with a walkie using the built-in antenna. But on March 8th, Roy was heard distinctly on the net, running his walkie through a homebrew quad antenna. Nice going, Roy!

Flea Markets

The Interstate Repeater Society will host a flea market at Lions Hall, Hudson, New Hampshire on 15 April 1989. Dealer setup is at 7:00am and the market opens at 9:00. Admission is \$2, tables are \$10, and talk-in is on 146.850 MHz. Call Wayne, KA1MKH, for more information.

And our own flea market is on April 30th (Sunday) at Wellesley High School, 9:00am. Admission \$2 for buyers and sellers alike. Talk-in on 147.03 MHz; call Tom, N1CPE, for details (508/ 877-3456).

DXNews

by Art Anderson, NT1M



We did not hear from anyone concerning last month's question about Morokulien; although Roger, W1EOA, said that it is not a town. Perhaps it is the name of a building. Stay tuned.

This month, another mystery. We had our headphones on, with the rig tuned accidentally to 29509 kHz, on 05 March 1989 at 0054z, and heard the following:

"...02642 03??? 1 04001 05478 06212 07461 0843? 09595 AMSAT"

"00100 01020 02653 03001 04001 05275 06782 075?? 0??38 09586 AMSAT"

This was in Morse code, at relatively slow speed. No station ID was heard. We suspect it was telemetry from one of the amateur-radio satellites, but would welcome any information.

George, WA5NVI, writes: "Here is a representative selection of DX activity since my last letter, in December. The setup is the same — inverted Vs on 40 and 80, dipoles on 20, 15, and 10; and none higher than 35 feet. I am running 50 watts on 80-20 and now 25 watts on 15 and 10 [meters], an increase from before. I also passed Extra class on January 8. Since getting back on the air in mid-August (after moving here from France), I have worked and confirmed 44 States, and worked about 50 countries (with about 20 confirmed) — operating CW only. With this station, it is a little harder to work DX on 80 (with current propagation and Boston QRN) and 20 (crowding and competition from QRO stations).

FG5BM	0233	14048	19 Dec	Guadeloupe
UZ0CWW	0343	14028	19 Dec	Khabarovsk Obl.
OA4AKE	1854	21134	31 Dec	Peru
UR2RIP	0433	14058	18 Jan	Estonia
OK2SSS	0355	3501	22 Jan	Czechoslovakia
DK5AD	0647	3503	22 Jan	West Germany
NL7DL	0357	21029	19 Feb	Alaska
ZL2MM	0308	21116	04 Mar	New Zealand
PZ1DW	0234	21012	07 Mar	Surinam
HC5AI/7	0306	21016	07 Mar	Ecuador
EA8BDX	0409	14013	08 Mar	Canary Is.
KH6SN	0450	14047	08 Mar	Hawaii
UQ1GXZ	0542	14043	08 Mar	Latvia
GJ4HSW	0653	7073	08 Mar	Jersey
CO8TV	0628	7026	11 Mar	Cuba
VK3AUC	0757	14048	20 Mar	Australia

The Reseau des Emetteurs Francais, the French amateur-radio organization, has announced that QSL cards from F6FNU will no longer be accepted for any REF award. Also, the International DX Association has severed ties with F6FNU, and the ARRL has set a letter to him concerning his QSL practices. *The DX Magazine* for April 1989 contains a complete report on Antoine Baldeck, F6FNU, a manager who has gained a reputation for high-handedness and avarice. It is hard to avoid him, because he manages 150 DX stations, and "QSL VIA F6FNU" is heard often. Among his quirks is that he demands *two* green stamps with your SAE for airmail return to the United States — a profit of \$1.56 over his postage cost. Also, he takes unannounced vacations for two months at a time, leaving DXers around the world wondering what became of their cards. For French stations, Baldeck demands a SASE *and* one IRC, for a direct return (if you do not send him enough, he sends the card back through the bureau).

Another quirk is that Baldeck screens the "quality" of the card you send him: any errors, incorrect time or call, etc. will cause him to return the card with a message scrawled on it; for example, he returned one card with the following note: "Fone=ridiculous. SSB AM FM?" If your call sign changes and you send him your old

card with the new call written in, he will reject it. "...It makes me great pain to answer certain QSL that are just rubbish," says he.

Your editor has one card, sent with only one green stamp, pending with this tyrant; Frank, NG1I, has no less than six (and he needs only two more for CW DXCC)! We shall keep you abreast of this curious story.

Martin Haasen, OY7ML, wrote a letter to *The DX Magazine* announcing that he has not been on the air since 21 December 1988, and that the person using his call is a pirate who has been plaguing him for years. This pirate calls people "idiot" and "lid" on the air, and poor Martin gets angry letters from the pirate's humiliated victims. He writes, "In my more than 40 years of ham life I have never used such words or manners against my fellow amateurs, over the air, so I am bitterly angry that this cannot be stopped, and I see no other way than to make it known that OY7ML is no more on the air, and amateurs should stop calling him, if they hear him." He suggests that those needing the Faeroe Islands look for OY3QN or OY2J on CW, or OY9JD on SSB. He will occasionally operate club station OY6FRA.

The spectacular propagation of January and February came to a sudden halt about the first week in March — the *aurora borealis*, so beautiful to most, is an unalloyed tragedy for DXers. Many of us who thought that at this rate we should be on the Honor Roll by summer, were served a large dish of humility. The problem is that, although the solar flux remains high, the geomagnetic field is continually disturbed, as measured by the A Index. If you are interested in these matters, George, WA5NVI, recommends the HF Propagation Bulletins available via telephone modem from NOAA in Boulder, Colorado: 303/ 497-5000, 1200 baud, 8 data bits, 1 stop bit, no parity. "This free dial-up BBS offers HF propagation bulletins and a wealth

of information on current geophysical and solar activity. The first time you call, you will be asked to register, and will be given a user number which you should enter at subsequent log-ons," George writes.

Please share your experiences with us, by writing to the editor at PO Box 9009, Wellesley 02181. A future column will focus on QSL techniques, so if you have any good advice, or interesting experiences in that line, now is the time to write — F6FNU stories would be especially timely!

Bulletin Boards

Following is a list of computer-accessible bulletin boards, compiled by Roger, N1EYZ, and George, WA5NVI:

Heath/Zenith	617/ 237-1511
Cul-de-Sac (Barry)	508/ 429-1784
N9HH	618/ 286-0251
Quincy (no name)	617/ 479-3432
73 Magazine	603/ 924-9809
Merrimack	603/ 424-5497
Bit by Bit	617/ 565-9136
Mass Hams	617/ 923-7605
County Morgue	508/ 250-8098
Boston Computer Society (a) Macintosh	617/ 625-7531
(b) Apple	617/ 246-4492
(c) IBM	617/ 332-5584
Ham Central	319/ 365-0470
NOAA Propagation	303/ 497-5000
Amsat	314/ 447-3003

If you would be kind enough to report any errors in or omissions from the list, we shall keep it current and update it from time to time.

Maidenhead Locator

by Art Anderson, NT1M

The January 1989 issue of *QST* contained an

article explaining how to convert between Maidenhead grid locator and conventional latitude/longitude. Since it is now becoming fashionable to put locators on QSL cards, and to give them in QSOs, you may wish to know the locator of your own QTH. The writer found the method given in *QST* to be laborious, and therefore wrote a few Fortran routines which do the job very efficiently — and which, unlike the unstructured Basic programs sometimes seen, are concise and easy to understand. The geographical positions of W1TKZ (Wellesley Red Cross) and W1TKZ/R (Newton-Wellesley Hospital) were used in debugging the software, and are given below for general interest:

W1TKZ	42°18.9'N, 71°16.3'W	FN42IH
W1TKZ/R	42°19.9'N, 71°14.8'W	FN42JH

If you would like copies of the subprograms, or if you would like to know the Maidenhead locator of your own QTH, write to the editor at the address on page 3. (Give your latitude and longitude if you want your locator.)

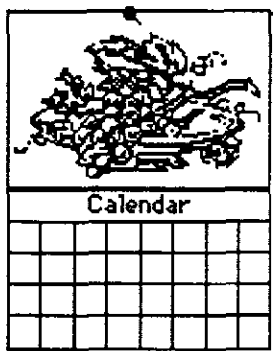
Two-meter Ops Wanted

Hams with two-meter handheld rigs are in great demand this time of year. If you want to help with public-safety communications, you have your pick of events. Here are just a few, with persons to call for more information:

17 April	Boston Marathon Kathy (KA1IYR)
30 April	Charles River Canoe Race Elaine (KA1SAO)
07 May	Walk for Hunger (Project Bread) Kathy (KA1IYR)
21 May	Hunnewell Hillclimb Dick (WA1ZLQ)
21 May	Charles River Run Mac (WB1BUM)

Dayton Anyone?

Denis Guillemette, KA1SAR, is planning to drive to the Dayton Hamfest, but would like to share the driving with someone. If you are interested, call him at 617/ 739-5170



06 Apr	WARS meeting (speaker: KA1ANT)
09 Apr	Framingham flea market
15 Apr	IRS flea market (see article)
16 Apr	MIT flea market
17 Apr	Boston Marathon
20 Apr	WARS meeting
30 Apr	WARS flea market; CR Canoe Race; Dayton Hamfest
04 May	WARS meeting (speaker: AG1F)
07 May	Walk for Hunger
18 May	WARS meeting
20 May	WARS exam session
21 May	Hunnewell Hillclimb; Charles River Run
01 Jun	WARS meeting
03 Jun	Deerfield hamfest
09 Jun	Mt Equinox expedition
15 Jun	WARS meeting
24 Jun	Field Day

New Members

Eleven persons have joined our Society since the Membership Directory was published with the March issue of this newspaper. The **Spark Gap** heartily welcomes each of them and hopes members will take the time to welcome each of them and make them feel at home:

Richard Cantin	KA1ECX	T
Bob Crockett	WILF	E
Bruce Frederick	KA1FGY	G
Barry Hawkes	NIBAN	G
Charlie Madden	*	N
Ken Matthews	*	N
Bruce Pigott	*	N
Scott Sminkey	N1GJQ	T
Charles Spooner	*	N
Roger Sullivan	*	T
Phil Warbasse	KA1OJI	G

* New ham — awaiting call sign

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The Spark Gap is published monthly, except July and August, by the Wellesley Amateur Radio Society. The Society hereby grants permission for reprinting any articles from The Spark Gap, provided only that the author and this newspaper are credited.

The Society's purpose is to encourage participation in amateur radio. Membership is open to all radio amateurs; dues are \$15 per year (September through August). Meetings of the Society are held on the first and third Thursdays of each month. The Society conducts classes for those intending to take FCC license examinations, and examination sessions four times a year. For more information please write to the editor, or to the Society:

The Wellesley Amateur Radio Society
211 Washington Street
Wellesley, Massachusetts 02181

We have also been fortunate in having Dave Crocker, W1TMO, demonstrate packet radio (during the greatest aurora ever witnessed by those in attendance); as well as Bruno (NR1G), Tom (N1CPE), Vern (ND1Z), Mort (K1IU), and Bill (N1EHM).

During the eighth week, yours truly pulled a fast one on the unsuspecting students, who thought they were taking only a practice code test for the real exam next month. Of the eleven who attended that night (during a spring snowstorm that came out of nowhere), nine passed. All nine expected to give the theory test a shot, as many had studied

ahead. Of the nine, five passed and await their call signs:

Bruce Pigott of Bedford
Steve Campisano of Norwood
Charlie Madden, Jr., of Shirley
Ross Sherbrooke of Dedham
Thomas McGee of Wollaston

Four students passed their code and will have taken their theory tests by March 27th. They are:

Ken Matthews
Robert Ferguson
Earl Durst
Mary Durst

Mary and Earl Durst may be the first husband-and-wife team to study together in a WARS novice course, and get their licenses together. I intend to mail their forms 610 together in a separate envelope, in hope they will get consecutive calls. The remaining students have either passed just the theory (and still have to pass the code), or are on the verge of passing.

With that, Roger and I bid 73 until the next Spark Gap, where we shall present the final tally of new Novices à la WARS.

New Call Signs

Following their success in the February exam session, Jerry Driscoll (ex-KA1000) received the new call sign, NV1T, while Scott Sminkey got N1GJQ.

Aurora

by Tom Kinahan, N1CPE

On or about March 10th, the largest solar flare in many years was recorded. As expected, HF communication links were severely interrupted, as well as some satellite

links. On Monday, March 13th, this writer looked up into a clear night sky to see it ablaze with color. Red and green lights filled the entire sky, not just on the northern horizon. Sightings were reported as far south as Jamaica. I wonder what the astronauts in the space shuttle could see, as the whole northern hemisphere was shrouded by the fiery aurora (*Discovery* was launched earlier that day).

In conversations with some local VHFers, we put together some interesting observations. During smaller auroras, pointing your antenna towards the northwest typically yielded contacts in the upper Midwest; but this time the furthest were only New York. It appears that signals in previous auroras were reflected back from a point in Canada, while this time they were reflected from northern New England.



Mort Cohan, K1IU, reported that he was able to point his beam in a southerly direction and hear a station on ground wave, but turn his beam north and hear the same station reflected from the aurora, while nulling out the ground-wave signal.

Arnie Adelman, W1GCI, reports that although he did not try to work the aurora, stations in Georgia and Florida were able to do so. Some, like W1JR, suspect there was some E-skip along with the aurora, which allowed signals from the South to propagate north far enough to pick up the aurora.

Arnie reports that the F2 propagation on six meters should begin in earnest in April. "I've worked quite a few in Europe on 6 [meters] over the past few months. It should get even

better as Summer comes.... They expect that even 2 [meters] will get some good F2 openings soon," according to Arnie.

May Speaker

At the WARS meeting on May 4, Al Hamilton, AG1F, will address the club on the FCC Auxiliary Group. The meeting will be at the Wellesley Red Cross building, at 7:30pm, and is open to all.

Ham Ads

Joe Eisenberg, WA0WRI, of Lincoln, Nebraska, visited one of our recent meetings. He told us of several TV spots advertising amateur radio which his club had produced. Dave Bush, K1RWK, now has copies of these, and is chairing a committee to see whether we can do something similar. He might need people to write spots, do voice-overs, or help contact the media. If you can help, talk to Dave.

ARCARC

After ten years without a radio club, Boston now has the newly formed American Red Cross Amateur Radio Club, with Bob Salow, WA1IDA, as its first president. The club will operate the Boston repeater (145.23 MHz), and focus on emergency and public-service communications.

Meetings will be held in Boston at the Red Cross headquarters, 99 Brookline Avenue. All hams and anyone else interested in amateur radio are invited to join. Call Bob, WA1IDA, at 617/ 527-2144 for more information.